Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Business Plan

2004/05

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Message from the Minister and the Director & CEO

The business plan for the 2004/05 fiscal year is intended to provide the public with an overview of the major priorities and goals for the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission in the coming year.

The Commission is continuing its efforts to implement the recommendations contained in the consultant's report from the organizational review which was released to the public in December 2002. The focus of this implementation process is providing more efficient, effective and transparent service to Nova Scotians. The recommendations set out in the consultant's report provide a blueprint to make this possible.

Progress in implementing the results of the review will be reported in the Commission's next Accountability Report. The guiding principle during implementation will continue to be providing the best service possible to Nova Scotians while making efficient use of resources.

Hon. Michael Baker
Minister Responsible for the N.S. Human Rights Act

Mayann Francis
Director & CEO

A. Mission

To reduce individual and systemic discrimination in support of a society characterized by equality. We value:

Respect and dignity, through words and actions in relation to all members of the public;
Diversity, recognizing everyone can contribute to our society;
Understanding, through education as a focal point for change;
Credibility, in being seen as independent and truly autonomous from government, and;
Integrity, in practicing what we preach and in serving as a model for government, other agencies and the private sector.

B. Planning Context

The Commission currently employs 19 people and has four offices: a central office in Halifax and regional offices in Sydney, Digby and New Glasgow.

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (hereinafter referred to as "the Commission") is an independent government agency charged with administering Nova Scotia's Human Rights Act (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"), a provincial statute created in 1969. Under the authority of the Act, the Commission focuses on two core business functions:

- resolving complaints of discrimination; and
- public education and outreach.

In order to carry out these core businesses in the rapidly evolving field of human rights and within a tight fiscal environment, the Commission must invest resources in ongoing staff training and seek partners from the public, private and non-governmental sectors to deliver its public education and outreach programs. Since 1999, the Race Relations Division has implemented a cost-recovery program for its workshops and training services. And in July 2000, the Commission initiated a multi-phase organizational review to look for more efficient and effective ways to provide service to Nova Scotians.

The results of the Commission's organizational review were released to the public in December 2002. The review was conducted in two phases, with the first examining mandate issues and pursuing limited public consultation on a discussion paper which focused on key issues. The second phase looked specifically at the roles, responsibilities and structures of the organization. Beginning in the 2003/04 fiscal year, the Commission has incorporated the recommendations from the review into its business processes. This has included re-examining timelines in the complaint process, updating policies and procedures and placing increasing emphasis on

settlement initiatives. The latter was recognized with the approval of a new Policy on Settlement Initiatives in July 2003.

During the 2004/05 fiscal year, the results of the organizational review will continue to be implemented to improve the level of service the Commission is able to deliver to the public. It is anticipated that the results of the organizational review will be implemented within the existing fiscal resources of the Commission.

C. Strategic Goals

Goals for the Commission in 2004/05 are:

1. Improved service delivery to the public through enhanced partnerships with other organizations and efficient and effective management of program delivery.

2. To promote efficient and effective resolutions to complaints of discrimination.

3. To help foster the development of a more equitable society and fair workplaces by pro-actively addressing discrimination in all its forms.

While the Commission is independent of government, its goals for 2004/05 mirror the spirit of the Provincial Government's goals by seeking to:

- promoting fiscal responsibility and acountability;
- building greater prosperity (N.B. - By enabling all Nova Scotians to participate in the economic and social life of the province.); and
- protecting what Nova Scotians value.

D. Core Businesses

Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination:

- Delivered collaboratively through the Investigation and Compliance and Race Relations and Affirmative Action divisions.
- Attempts settlement initiatives to resolve at all stages of the complaint process in accordance with the Act and Commission policies.
- Investigates complaints of discrimination (approximately 200 active files in 2003/04) and recommends options for resolution to the Commissioners.

- Identifies emerging issues and targets skill development for Commission staff in response.
- Establishes best practices for addressing systemic discrimination in collaboration with the Coordinator of Race Relations & Affirmative Action.

Public Education & Outreach:

- Raises awareness of human rights issues and encourages peace, harmony and respect for all Nova Scotians.
- Involves the staff of the Race Relations and Affirmative Action and Investigation and Compliance divisions and the Office of the Director and CEO.
- Develops and maintains effective links with government, business, the legal community, schools, agencies and community groups to raise awareness of human rights issues and compliance with the Act.
- Undertakes communication initiatives aimed at increasing the Commission's public profile.
- Fosters social research on human rights issues and topics.
- Provides education and training programs in workplaces, schools and other settings.
- Ensures cost-recovery in service delivery wherever possible.
- Promotes opportunities for all Nova Scotians by working with employers to develop agreements that promote diversity in hiring and promotion.

E. Priorities for 2004/05

Priorities identified by the Commission for 2004/05 are:

Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination

- In cooperation with Mi'kmaq and other aboriginal communities, develop an aboriginal action plan to improve the services the Commission offers to these communities, particularly through the development of effective models of dispute resolution.
- Complete the recruitment of a roster of independent mediators to assist the Commission in promoting settlement of complaints in accordance with the Act and the Policy on Settlement Initiatives.
- Improve the complaint process by continuing to implement the recommendations from the organizational review.
- Introduce a computerized case management system to improve the tracking and quality control of the complaint process.

Public Education & Outreach:

- Continue involvement with government, institutional and community partners to further develop linkages and forums for discussion and change; this includes oral presentations on trends and concerns to government and opposition caucuses in conjunction with the filing of the Commission's annual report.
- Develop a comprehensive communication's plan for 2004 events and activities.
- Continue policy research and development in partnership with external organizations in emerging areas of human rights, including undertaking special projects aimed at mental health consumers as specified in the settlement agreement for *Archibald Kaiser v. Executive Council of Nova Scotia*.
- Promote the Commission as a source of information and resources on human rights and compliance issues under the Act for employers and employees in the public, private, educational and not-for-profit sectors.

F. Budget Context

See attached Schedule 1.

G. Outcomes and Measures

See attached Schedule 2.

Schedule 1 - Budget Context

N.S. Human Rights Commission - Estimated Budget Expenditures			
	2003/04 Estimate	2003/04 Forecast	2004/05 Estimate
	$ Millions	$ Millions	$ Millions
Total - Gross Current	$1.746	$1.746	$1.746
Total - Program Expenses	$0.483	$0.801	$0.467
Funds From Kaiser Settlement*	$0.030	$0.030	$0.030
Salaries & Benefits	$1.263	$0.915	$1.249
Funded Staff (FTEs)	22	22	22

*** Not included in core funds for HRC.**

Schedule 2 - Outcomes & Measures

Core Business Area: Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Base Year Measure (2001/02)**	**Target - 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
More efficient complaint handling process	Average time to process complaints	24 months	12 months	- Recruit Intake & Assessment Analyst. - Review timelines for stages of the complaint process. - Implement the Oracle-based case management database to improve the ability of management and staff to assess the efficiency of the complaint process. - Tie performance management to the efficiency of the complaint process.

Core Business Area: Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Base Year Measure (2001/02)**	**Target - 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
	% of cases where settlement initiatives are attempted	25 %	40 %	- Work with the Intake & Assessment Analyst to develop a process for assessing the settlement potential of incoming inquiries from the public. - Complete the recruitment and training of a roster of independent mediators. - Promote the value of settlement initiatives in public outreach and education activities.
More efficient complaint handling process	Number of files with checklist for systemic issues completed.	0 %	100 %	- Tie performance management to the quality of individual file management by Human Rights Officers. - Provide continued training and development to staff on systemic discrimination principles.

Core Business Area: Resolution of Complaints of Discrimination				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Base Year Measure (2001/02)**	**Target - 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
Staff knowledgeable about emerging issues.	Response time to parties.	4 weeks	2 weeks	- On-going staff training on emerging issues. - Recruit a Legal & Policy Analyst to promote research on emerging issues. - Regular meetings with staff to review matters of jurisdiction and recent case law.

Core Business: Public Education & Outreach				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Base Year Measure (2001/02)**	**Target - 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
Commission recognized as a leader in the human rights field.	The number of strategic partnerships for event planning.	5 strategic partnerships	10 strategic partnerships	- Continue to expand membership of PAR (Partners Against Racism) committee. -Promote volunteer committee development through regional offices. - Develop a communications plan/guide that will underlie the messaging and media activities for the year. - Create manual for organizing events. - Plan special events targeting employers such as "Champions for the Workplace". - Continue special evnts targeted at the faith community such as the "Day of Reflection"

Core Business: Public Education & Outreach				
Outcome	**Measure**	**Base Year Measure (2001/02)**	**Target - 2004/05**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
Employers committed to inclusive workplaces free of discrimination.	Number of requests for training.	18	25	- Plan special events targeting employers such as "Champions for the Workplace". - Develop key messages for employers. - Seek out networking opportunities.

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